

## Q4 2024: Agency Update

### Strategic Initiatives

#### 1. Regional Economic Development Strategy & Tourism Master Plan

- CEO, Andrew Beckett presented final plans to municipal councils and stakeholders.
- A new page was developed on the agency's website to house the strategies: <https://www.envisionsaintjohn.com/regional-insights-strategies>.
- A [press release](#) was published in December launching the plans publicly.

#### 2. Multi-modal Transportation & Distribution Park

- The final phase of a feasibility study was completed and submitted to stakeholders.
- An engineering analysis of site preparation and servicing costs was completed to assess the feasibility of the preferred site. This was also presented to stakeholders.
- Based on input from stakeholders, further work on this project has been discontinued at this time.

#### 3. Regional Immigration Strategy

- Completed the engagement phase with a final session that convened the Steering Committee and the Saint John Local Immigration Partnership Council. The final plan is expected in Q1 2025 with presentations to stakeholders and municipal councils taking place in Q2 2025.

#### 4. Envision Saint John Strategic Plan

- Engagement sessions were held with agency staff and board of directors, as well as interviews with each municipality and the Fundy Region Service Commission (FRSC).
- An initial draft was developed for feedback and will be shared with staff, board of directors, municipalities and the FRSC in Q1 2025.
- The final plan is due in June 2025.

### Strategic Communications

#### 1. Q4 Growth Stories

- [Building Community and Stability Through Innovative Housing Solutions](#)
- [Pascan Takes Off in the Saint John Region: Providing Regional Connectivity](#)
- [Rethinking Recruitment: NTI Boilers' Journey Through the Atlantic Immigration Program](#)

- [From a Basement Studio to the National Stage - Chavah Designs Makes Waves in Canadian Fashion](#)

## 2. Media Relations

- [Economic Developers Association of Canada Announces "Bests of the Best"](#)
- [Envision Saint John Unveils Bold New Plans to Shape the Region's Future](#)
  - [CHSJ News Coverage](#)

## Tourism Promotion, Sales & Marketing

### 1. Destination Campaign

- The 2024 Spring/Summer final wrap report was received in late October. Final campaign results were +9.5M Impressions in the Maritimes and +6.6M Impressions in Ontario.
- The 2024 Fall Campaign launched on September 15 and ran until December 15 - targeting the Maritimes, this campaign generated 6.5M Impressions. A portion of this campaign focused on the holidays and generated 789K Impressions.
- Development began on re-evaluating 2025 target audiences based on visitor profiles. This will allow a stronger understanding of potential visitors in key target markets and influence our 2025 campaign direction.

### 2. Tourism Activations and Social Media Campaigns

- Various event-based ads were in market, including a focus on holiday events.

### 3. Tourism Stakeholder Engagement

- Convened industry stakeholders to understand general impressions of the 2024 season, including identifying a number of common opportunities and challenges.
- Hosted two professional development sessions for the industry: a Digital Marketing Workshop in partnership with Roundtable Creative and a Rainbow Registered Information session in partnership with Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce.

### 4. Welcome Centres

- The Welcome Centre at AREA 506 Waterfront Container Village closed for the season on November 4 - the final day of cruise season. This Welcome Centre is scheduled to re-open on May 16, 2025.
- The Saint John City Market location is open year-round: Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## **5. Meetings & Conventions Sales**

- Our bid to host the 2025 Atlantic Canada Showcase (ACS) in Saint John from October 6 - 8, 2025 was successful.
  - Atlantic Canada Showcase is marketplace designed for the group tour, fully independent traveller (FIT), and specialty travel industry (including motorcoach tours). There will be 65 buyers and 130 sellers attending. The sellers are all located within Atlantic Canada. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the Saint John Region to those who are planning and booking group travel.
  - Director of Destination Marketing, Jen Silliphant has been named co-chair of ACS 2025, sharing the position with local operator Roy Billingsly (Steamers Lobster Co/Waterstreet Dinner Theatre).
- The Travel Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB) hosted its annual conference and awards gala in Saint John from November 12 - 14, 2024. It was the largest TIANB conference to date, with more than 160 delegates in attendance.

## **6. Business Events Partnership**

- The ExploreNB team prepared for their next events as a provincial contingent.
  - GoWest and Ottawa Meet Week will take place in February 2025.

## **7. Travel Trade**

- Tourism Growth Coordinator, Kalynn McCavour attended the Ontario Motor Coach Association (OCMA) Marketplace where she met with tour operators for two days and updated them on products and services in the region that are available to their upcoming groups.

## **Sport & Major Events**

### **1. 2029 Canada Games**

- Memorandums of understanding were put in place with all proposed sport venues.
- Work on the comprehensive bid continued and is due on January 31 2025.
- Community bid and info sessions are scheduled for Moncton and Saint John in January 2025.
- Planning is underway for the Canada Games Council bid selection committee site tour, which will be held in Moncton and Saint John in February 2025.
- The bid award announcement will be made the first week of April 2025.

## Population Growth & Workforce Development

### 1. Population Growth

- Completed fall program updates to the New Resident Service Portal.
- Transition plans have been initiated to transfer the Local Immigration Partnership to Envision Saint John in 2025. Funding to support the Partnerships' activities has been approved by the IRCC with contract to be finalized in Q1 2025.
- Participated in the Public Policy Forum roundtable discussion about immigration in New Brunswick.
- Partnered with the Information & Communications Technology Council and TechImpact to host a webinar for tech professionals who have not yet arrived in Canada - promoting our region as a desirable destination.

### 2. Workforce Development

- Wrapped the 2024 Talent Attraction and Retention marketing campaign strategy. Began planning and reviewing data for 2025.
- Consolidated a recruitment events newsletter for Hiring Professionals, which resulted in an increased employer participation at community events.
- Hosted a recruitment event in partnership with TechImpact, WorkingNB and the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick that featured ten employers, and 130 jobseekers.
- Sponsored UNB's Fall Career Fair, which featured more than 35 exhibitors, showcasing employment and training opportunities to recent graduates and students.
- Partnered with Skills Canada New Brunswick on three initiatives: Female in Trades Panel and Career Exploration, Intro to the Trades camps for middle school students, and support for two Saint John Region students to attend a National Cybersecurity Competition.
- Sponsored the Atlantic Regional Conference for Chartered Professionals in Human Resources NB (CPHRNB).
- Signed a partnership agreement for 2025 to support the local Saint John CPHR chapter activities and provide additional resources for local HR professionals.
- Sponsored Mentorship and Apprenticeship Strategic Workforce Service's Gala.
- Supported the Job Developers Network fall committee meeting, which facilitated meaningful knowledge sharing and connections between professionals from jobseeker support organizations in the region.
- Continued collaboration with the YMCA of Southwestern New Brunswick on the Newcomer Employment Champions Program.

### **3. Port Saint John Workforce Partnership 2.0**

- Focus groups were held with Port employers and employees regarding requirements for a new dispatch system.
- Request for proposals were issued to qualified vendors for dispatch supporting technologies.
- The Port Saint John partners meeting took place for information sharing on immediate operational matters and long-term strategic goals.
- Labour Forecasting project team met to define project scope.

## **Economic Intelligence, Investment Attraction & Real Estate Development**

### **1. Economic Intelligence**

- Hosted the inaugural State of the Economy Presentation.
- Provided data support for the Regional Immigration Strategy.
- Launched a labour analysis to assess the labour requirements of core sectors identified in the Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- Completed five custom data analysis requests for community and private sector partners.
- Developed two economic impact assessments for community partners, events and festivals.

### **2. Industrial Investment Attraction**

- Partnered with ONB, Invest Canada, and Saint John Industrial on more than 10 active industrial investment attraction opportunities.
- Prepared for the launch of a regional industrial strategy, in partnership with Saint John Industrial and Opportunities New Brunswick.
- Completed funding applications for federal support to enhance the regional industrial investment attraction services.
- Completed a draft of the region's industrial investment attraction sales package. Finalized package is scheduled for Q1 2025.
- Provided a presentation to the City of Saint John's Growth Committee on the importance of industrial development and emerging opportunities for the region.
- Completed initial planning for the establishment of an energy sector roundtable in 2025.

### **3. Real Estate Development**

- Explored several leads with religious institutions on surplus property to spur development.
- Continued discussions with multiple out-of-market developers on the development of several sites in the region.

- Continued support to municipal partners for Housing Accelerator Funding programs and municipal incentives.
- Provided project planning support for a potential cultural project.
- Began a review on government land for discussions on potential development site opportunities.
- Hosted a regional Developer Information and Networking event to discuss new incentives and programs across municipalities to support development.
- Continued to explore the viability of more than 50 sites through a site activation program.

## Entrepreneurship & Business Growth

### 1. Impact Loan

- Assisted 13 businesses through the Impact Loan application process including business plan developments and cash flow projections.
- Four applications were approved by the Impact Loan Committee in Q4 for funding to start or expand businesses totaling, \$140,000.
- Participated in a multi-day meeting with the administrators of the ACOA Seed Funding Initiative (Impact Loan) to discuss the future evolution of the program. Across Atlantic Canada - Envision Saint John is the only organization that saw growth in funds administered over the last year.

### 2. Entrepreneurship

- Supported multiple entrepreneurship programs through our partner ConnexionWorks including Business Essentials workshops to help support entrepreneurs through their journey with hands on skills training. Workshops were delivered to 92 people in the region. Topics included digital marketing, networking, e-commerce and access to capital.
- Navigation support and business assistance was provided to 63 potential entrepreneurs. This is an increase of 90% year-over-year.
- Conducted six exploratory visits with international residents looking to immigrate to Canada through the Entrepreneurship Stream.
- Growth Coordinator, Nada Rabie participated as a guest judge for the UNB MBA Business Pitch competition.
- Director of Entrepreneurship & Business Growth, Craig Wilkins was a panelist for the Green Horizon Summit, discussing government and business collaboration for decarbonization.
- Sponsored the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce 2024 Outstanding Business Awards.

- Partnered with UNB on an initiative designed to bring undergraduate business students, MBA's and regional stakeholders together to brainstorm various industry initiatives that can help support the Ambition 2035 goals of increasing Canada's Ocean Economy.
- Sponsored and attended InnovateNB 2024 Celebration, which featured workshops on Artificial Intelligence.
- Co-hosted a Build Your Region event with ConnexionWorks during 2024 Global Entrepreneurship Week. This event brought together approximately 50 members of the community to network and create business pitches that would contribute to the region.
- Sponsored and presented at the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards.
- Convened a group of key stakeholders to evaluate the proposed Business Retention and Expansion Program, which is under development. Feedback has been received and adjustments to the program are underway. Anticipated launch of the program is Q1 2025.
- Collaborated with the Population Growth and Workforce Development team on an initiative with the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce's to develop a Lunch & Learn on Hiring & Retaining employees presented by Practical Human Resources.
- Growth Coordinator, Nada Rabie was invited to present and attend the 7th International Conference on Entrepreneurship for Sustainability & Impact (ESI) 2024, held in Qatar. The conference focused on AI's transformative potential in reshaping business strategies, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. Nada presented her academic research paper titled "The Role of AI on the Entrepreneurial and Innovative Mindset of University Students in MENA and Canada and the Overall Impact on the Students' Readiness: A Comparative Study".
- Developed an online Business Resources Navigation Portal that will launch in Q1 2025.

### **3. Health Care Recruitment & Retention**

- Met with Hampton's Healthcare Recruitment Council to discuss the various initiatives the agency has done and future plans.
- Sponsored and attended the New Brunswick Medical Education Foundation Annual Scholarship Celebration where the agency was featured for the new bursary that was created to provide financial support to medical students with a pledge to stay in the region post-graduation.
- Sponsored and presented at the "Well Said" event on the topic of Recruiting and Retaining Healthcare Professional Staff.

- Growth Coordinator, Olga Tyshchenko welcomed two physicians to the region as potential new Anesthesiologists - touring and promoting the region as the place to live, work and play.

## Administration

### 1. Human Resources

- A new Employee Handbook and set of policies was finalized and will be rolled out to the team in early January 2025.
- The Champman Group designed a new comprehensive employee engagement survey that was administered in December. Results are expected in January 2025.
- Shawna Dickie-Garnhum, Meetings & Conventions Sales Manager retired at the end of November.
- Lina Ortiz, Sales Manager was welcomed to the team in mid-November.

### 2. Truth & Reconciliation

- We played an active role on the working committee and sponsored the first Menahqesk Powwow that was held in the Saint John Region in October.
- We continue to build our connections with the local Indigenous community - hosting several meetings in relation to development, tourism, and sport.

### 3. Customer Relationship Management

- System requirements were developed along with an organization data model and evaluation criteria.
- Vendor engagement launched.

### 4. Budget & Workplans

- Key activities, milestones and approval processes were identified.